



IN WAR TIME

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



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TO
SAMUEL E. SEWALL
AND
HARRIET W. SEWALL,
OF MELROSE.

OLOR ISCANUS queries: "Why should we
Vex at the land's ridiculous miserie?"
So on his Usk banks, in the blood-red dawn
Of England's civil strife, did careless Vaughan
Bemock his times. O friends of many years!
Though faith and trust are stronger than our fears,
And the signs promise peace with liberty,
Not thus we trifle with our country's tears
And sweat of agony. The future's gain
Is certain as God's truth; but, meanwhile, pain
Is bitter and tears are salt: our voices take
A sober tone; our very household songs
Are heavy with a nation's griefs and wrongs;
And innocent mirth is chastened for the sake
Of the brave hearts that nevermore shall beat,
The eyes that smile no more, the unreturning feet!





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IN WAR TIME.





THY WILL BE DONE.

WE see not, know not ; all our way
Is night, — with Thee alone is day :
From out the torrent's troubled drift,
Above the storm our prayers we lift,
Thy will be done !

The flesh may fail, the heart may faint,
But who are we to make complaint,
Or dare to plead, in times like these,
The weakness of our love of ease ?
Thy will be done !

We take with solemn thankfulness
Our burden up, nor ask it less,
And count it joy that even we
May suffer, serve, or wait for Thee,
Whose will be done !

Though dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice.

Thy will be done !

And if, in our unworthiness,
Thy sacrificial wine we press
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done !

If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,

And, blest by Thee, our present pain
Be Liberty's eternal gain,
Thy will be done !

Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of the destinies !
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain,
Thy will be done !





A WORD FOR THE HOUR.

THE firmament breaks up. In black
eclipse

Light after light goes out. One evil star,
Luridly glaring through the smoke of war,
As in the dream of the Apocalypse,
Drags others down. Let us not weakly weep
Nor rashly threaten. Give us grace to keep
Our faith and patience ; wherefore should we
leap

On one hand into fratricidal fight,
Or, on the other, yield eternal right,
Frame lies of law, and good and ill confound ?
What fear we ? Safe on freedom's vantage
ground

Our feet are planted : let us there remain
In unvengeful calm, no means untried
Which truth can sanction, no just claim denied,
The sad spectators of a suicide !
They break the links of Union : shall we light
The fires of hell to weld anew the chain
On that red anvil where each blow is pain ?
Draw we not even now a freer breath,
As from our shoulders falls a load of death
Loathsome as that the Tuscan's victim bore
When keen with life to a dead horror bound ?
Why take we up the accursed thing again ?
Pity, forgive, but urge them back no more
Who, drunk with passion, flaunt disunion's rag
With its vile reptile blazon. Let us press
The golden cluster on our brave old flag
In closer union, and, if numbering less,
Brighter shall shine the stars which still remain.

16th, 1st month, 1861.



“EIN FESTE BURG IST UNSER GOTT.”

(LUTHER'S HYMN.)

WE wait beneath the furnace-blast
The pangs of transformation ;
Not painlessly doth God recast
And mould anew the nation.
Hot burns the fire
Where wrongs expire ;
Nor spares the hand
That from the land
Uproots the ancient evil.

The hand-breadth cloud the sages feared
Its bloody rain is dropping ;

The poison plant the fathers spared

All else is overtopping.

East, West, South, North,

It curses the earth ;

All justice dies,

And fraud and lies

Live only in its shadow.

What gives the wheat-field blades of steel ?

What points the rebel cannon ?

What sets the roaring rabble's heel

On the old star-spangled pennon ?

What breaks the oath

Of the men o' the South ?

What whets the knife

For the Union's life ? —

Hark to the answer : Slavery !

Then waste no blows on lesser foes

In strife unworthy freemen.

God lifts to-day the veil, and shows
The features of the demon !
O North and South,
Its victims both,
Can ye not cry,
“ Let slavery die ! ”
And union find in freedom ?

What though the cast-out spirit tear
The nation in his going ?
We who have shared the guilt must share
The pang of his o’erthrowing !
Whate’er the loss,
Whate’er the cross,
Shall they complain
Of present pain
Who trust in God’s hereafter ?

For who that leans on His right arm
Was ever yet forsaken ?

What righteous cause can suffer harm

If He its part has taken ?

Though wild and loud

And dark the cloud

Behind its folds

His hand upholds

The calm sky of to-morrow !

Above the maddening cry for blood,

Above the wild war-drumming,

Let Freedom's voice be heard, with good

The evil overcoming.

Give prayer and purse

To stay the Curse

Whose wrong we share,

Whose shame we bear,

Whose end shall gladden Heaven !

In vain the bells of war shall ring

Of triumphs and revenges,

While still is spared the evil thing

That severs and estranges.

But blest the ear

That yet shall hear

The jubilant bell

That rings the knell

Of Slavery forever !

Then let the selfish lip be dumb,

And hushed the breath of sighing ;

Before the joy of peace must come

The pains of purifying.

God give us grace

Each in his place

To bear his lot,

And, murmuring not,

Endure and wait and labor !



TO JOHN C. FREMONT.

THY error, Fremont, simply was to act
A brave man's part, without the states-
man's tact,
And, taking counsel but of common sense,
To strike at cause as well as consequence.
O, never yet since Roland wound his horn
At Roncesvalles, has a blast been blown
Far-heard, wide-echoed, startling as thine own,
Heard from the van of freedom's hope forlorn!
It had been safer, doubtless, for the time,
To flatter treason, and avoid offence
To that Dark Power whose underlying crime
Heaves upward its perpetual turbulence.

But, if thine be the fate of all who break
The ground for truth's seed, or forerun their
 years
Till lost in distance, or with stout hearts make
A lane for freedom through the level spears,
Still take thou courage ! God has spoken
 through thee,
Irrevocable, the mighty words, Be free !
The land shakes with them, and the slave's
 dull ear
Turns from the rice-swamp stealthily to hear.
Who would recall them now must first arrest
The winds that blow down from the free North-
 west,
Ruffling the Gulf ; or like a scroll roll back
The Mississippi to its upper springs.
Such words fulfil their prophecy, and lack
But the full time to harden into things.



THE WATCHERS.

BESIDE a stricken field I stood ;
On the torn turf, on grass and wood,
Hung heavily the dew of blood.

Still in their fresh mounds lay the slain,
But all the air was quick with pain
And gusty sighs and tearful rain.

Two angels, each with drooping head
And folded wings and noiseless tread,
Watched by that valley of the dead.

The one, with forehead saintly bland
And lips of blessing, not command,
Leaned, weeping, on her olive wand.

The other's brows were scarred and knit,
His restless eyes were watch-fires lit,
His hands for battle-gauntlets fit.

“How long!”—I knew the voice of Peace,—
“Is there no respite? — no release? —
When shall the hopeless quarrel cease?”

“O Lord, how long! — One human soul
Is more than any parchment scroll,
Or any flag thy winds unroll.

“What price was Ellsworth's, young and brave?
How weigh the gift that Lyon gave,
Or count the cost of Winthrop's grave?”

“O brother! if thine eye can see,
Tell how and when the end shall be.
What hope remains for thee and me.”

Then Freedom sternly said: “I shun
No strife nor pang beneath the sun,
When human rights are staked and won.

“I knelt with Ziska’s hunted flock,
I watched in Toussaint’s cell of rock,
I walked with Sidney to the block.

“The moor of Marston felt my tread,
Through Jersey snows the march I led,
My voice Magenta’s charges sped.

“But now, through weary day and night,
I watch a vague and aimless fight
For leave to strike one blow aright.

“On either side my foe they own :
One guards through love his ghastly throne,
And one through fear to reverence grown.

“ Why wait we longer, mocked, betrayed,
By open foes, or those afraid
To speed thy coming through my aid ?

“ Why watch to see who win or fall ? —
I shake the dust against them all,
I leave them to their senseless brawl.”

“ Nay,” Peace implored : “ yet longer wait ;
The doom is near, the stake is great :
God knoweth if it be too late.

“ Still wait and watch ; the way prepare
Where I with folded wings of prayer
May follow, weaponless and bare.”

“Too late!” the stern, sad voice replied,
“Too late!” its mournful echo sighed,
In low lament the answer died.

A rustling as of wings in flight,
An upward gleam of lessening white,
So passed the vision, sound and sight.

But round me, like a silver bell
Rung down the listening sky to tell
Of holy help, a sweet voice fell.

“Still hope and trust,” it sang; “the rod
Must fall, the wine-press must be trod,
But all is possible with God!”



TO ENGLISHMEN.

YOU flung your taunt across the wave ;
We bore it as became us,
Well knowing that the fettered slave
Left friendly lips no option save
To pity or to blame us.

You scoffed our plea. “ Mere lack of will,
Not lack of power,” you told us :
We showed our free-state records ; still
You mocked, confounding good and ill,
Slave-haters and slaveholders.

We struck at Slavery ; to the verge
Of power and means we checked it ;

Lo ! — presto, change ! its claims you urge,
Send greetings to it o'er the surge,
And comfort and protect it.

But yesterday you scarce could shake,
In slave-abhorring rigor,
Our Northern palms, for conscience' sake :
To-day you clasp the hands that ache
With “walloping the nigger !” *

O Englishmen ! — in hope and creed,
In blood and tongue our brothers !
We too are heirs of Runnymede ;
And Shakespeare's fame and Cromwell's deed
Are not alone our mother's.

“Thicker than water,” in one rill
Through centuries of story

* See English caricatures of America: Slaveholder and cow-
hide, with the motto, “Have n't I a right to wallop my nigger ? ”

Our Saxon blood has flowed, and still
We share with you its good and ill,
The shadow and the glory.

Joint heirs and kinfolk, leagues of wave
Nor length of years can part us :
Your right is ours to shrine and grave,
The common freehold of the brave,
The gift of saints and martyrs.

Our very sins and follies teach
Our kindred frail and human :
We carp at faults with bitter speech,
The while for one unshared by each
We have a score in common.

We bowed the heart, if not the knee,
To England's Queen, God bless her !
We praised you when your slaves went free :
We seek to unchain ours. Will ye
Join hands with the oppressor ?

And is it Christian England cheers
The bruiser, not the bruised?
And must she run, despite the tears
And prayers of eighteen hundred years,
A-muck in Slavery's crusade?

O black disgrace! O shame and loss
Too deep for tongue to phrase on!
Tear from your flag its holy cross,
And in your van of battle toss
The pirate's skull-bone blazon!





ASTRÆA AT THE CAPITOL.

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA, 1862.

WHEN first I saw our banner wave
Above the nation's council-hall,
I heard beneath its marble wall
The clanking fetters of the slave!

In the foul market-place I stood,
And saw the Christian mother sold,
And childhood with its locks of gold,
Blue-eyed and fair with Saxon blood.

I shut my eyes, I held my breath,
And, smothering down the wrath and shame
That set my Northern blood aflame,
Stood silent — where to speak was death.

Beside me gloomed the prison-cell
Where wasted one in slow decline
For uttering simple words of mine,
And loving freedom all too well.

The flag that floated from the dome
Flapped menace in the morning air ;
I stood a perilled stranger where
The human broker made his home.

For crime was virtue : Gown and Sword
And Law their threefold sanction gave,
And to the quarry of the slave
Went hawking with our symbol-bird.

On the oppressor's side was power ;
And yet I knew that every wrong,
However old, however strong,
But waited God's avenging hour.

I knew that truth would crush the lie, —
Somehow, some time, the end would be ;
Yet scarcely dared I hope to see
The triumph with my mortal eye.

But now I see it ! In the sun
A free flag floats from yonder dome,
And at the nation's hearth and home
The justice long delayed is done.

Not as we hoped, in calm of prayer,
The message of deliverance comes,
But heralded by roll of drums
On waves of battle-troubled air ! —

'Midst sounds that madden and appall,
 The song that Bethlehem's shepherds knew !
 The harp of David melting through
 The demon-agonies of Saul !

Not as we hoped ; — but what are we ?
 Above our broken dreams and plans
 God lays, with wiser hand than man's,
 The corner-stones of liberty.

I cavil not with Him : the voice
 That freedom's blessed gospel tells
 Is sweet to me as silver bells,
 Rejoicing ! — yea, I will rejoice !

Dear friends still toiling in the sun, —
 Ye dearer ones who, gone before,
 Are watching from the eternal shore
 The slow work by your hands begun, —

Rejoice with me ! The chastening rod
Blossoms with love ; the furnace heat
Grows cool beneath His blessed feet
Whose form is as the Son of God !

Rejoice ! Our Marah's bitter springs
Are sweetened ; on our ground of grief
Rise day by day in strong relief
The prophecies of better things.

Rejoice in hope ! The day and night
Are one with God, and one with them
Who see by faith the cloudy hem
Of Judgment fringed with Mercy's light !





THE BATTLE AUTUMN OF 1862.

THE flags of war like storm-birds fly, •
The charging trumpets blow ;
Yet rolls no thunder in the sky,
No earthquake strives below.

And, calm and patient, Nature keeps
Her ancient promise well,
Though o'er her bloom and greenness sweeps
The battle's breath of hell.

And still she walks in golden hours
Through harvest-happy farms,
And still she wears her fruits and flowers
Like jewels on her arms.

What mean the gladness of the plain,
This joy of eve and morn,
The mirth that shakes the beard of grain
And yellow locks of corn ?

Ah ! eyes may well be full of tears,
And hearts with hate are hot ;
But even-paced come round the years,
And Nature changes not.

She meets with smiles our bitter grief,
With songs our groans of pain ;
She mocks with tint of flower and leaf
The war-field's crimson stain.

Still, in the cannon's pause, we hear
Her sweet thanksgiving-psalm ;
Too near to God for doubt or fear,
She shares th' eternal calm.

She knows the seed lies safe below
The fires that blast and burn ;
For all the tears of blood we sow
She waits the rich return.

She sees with clearer eye than ours
The good of suffering born, —
The hearts that blossom like her flowers,
And ripen like her corn.

O, give to us, in times like these,
The vision of her eyes ;
And make her fields and fruited trees
Our golden prophecies !

O, give to us her finer ear !
Above this stormy din,
We too would hear the bells of cheer
Ring peace and freedom in !



MITHRIDATES AT CHIOS.*

K NOW'ST thou, O slave-cursed land!
How, when the Chian's cup of guilt
Was full to overflow, there came
God's justice in the sword of flame
That, red with slaughter to its hilt,
Blazed in the Cappadocian victor's hand?

* It is recorded that the Chians, when subjugated by Mithridates of Cappadocia, were delivered up to their own slaves, to be carried away captive to Colohis. Athenæus considers this a just punishment for their wickedness in first introducing the slave-trade into Greece. From this ancient villany of the Chians the proverb arose, "The Chian hath bought himself a master."

The heavens are still and far ;
But, not unheard of awful Jove,
The sighing of the island slave
Was answered, when the Ægean wave
The keels of Mithridates clove,
And the vines shrivelled in the breath of war.

“Robbers of Chios ! hark,”
The victor cried, “to Heaven’s decree !
Pluck your last cluster from the vine,
Drain your last cup of Chian wine ;
Slaves of your slaves, your doom shall be,
In Colchian mines by Phasis rolling dark.”

Then rose the long lament
From the hoar sea-god’s dusky caves :
The priestess rent her hair and cried,
“Woe ! woe ! The gods are sleepless-
eyed ! ”
And, chained and scourged, the slaves of slaves,
The lords of Chios into exile went.

“ The gods at last pay well,”
So Hellas sang her taunting song,
“ The fisher in his net is caught,
The Chian hath his master bought ” ;
And isle from isle, with laughter long,
Took up and sped the mocking parable.

Once more the slow, dumb years
Bring their avenging cycle round,
And, more than Hellas taught of old,
Our wiser lesson shall be told,
Of slaves uprising, freedom-crowned,
To break, not wield, the scourge wet with their
blood and tears.





THE PROCLAMATION.

S AINT Patrick, slave to Milcho of the herds
Of Ballymena, wakened with these words :

“ Arise, and flee

Out from the land of bondage, and be free ! ”

Glad as a soul in pain, who hears from heaven
The angels singing of his sins forgiven,

And, wondering, sees

His prison opening to their golden keys,

He rose, a man who laid him down a slave,

Shook from his locks the ashes of the grave,

And outward trod

Into the glorious liberty of God.

He cast the symbols of his shame away ;
And, passing where the sleeping Milcho lay,
 Though back and limb
Smarted with wrong, he prayed, “ God pardon
 him ! ”

So went he forth : but in God’s time he came
To light on Uilline’s hills a holy flame ;
 And, dying, gave
The land a saint that lost him as a slave.

O dark, sad millions, patiently and dumb
Waiting for God, your hour, at last, has come,
 And freedom’s song
Breaks the long silence of your night of wrong !

Arise and flee ! shake off the vile restraint
Of ages ; but, like Ballymena’s saint,
 The oppressor spare,
Heap only on his head the coals of prayer.

Go forth, like him ! like him return again,
To bless the land whereon in bitter pain

Ye toiled at first,
And heal with freedom what your slavery
cursed.





ANNIVERSARY POEM.

[Read before the Alumni of the Friends' Yearly Meeting School, at the Annual Meeting at Newport, R. I., 15th 6th Mo., 1863.]

ONCE more, dear friends, you meet
beneath

A clouded sky :

Not yet the sword has found its sheath,
And on the sweet spring airs the breath
Of war floats by.

Yet trouble springs not from the ground,
Nor pain from chance ;
The Eternal order circles round,
And wave and storm find mete and bound
In Providence.

Full long our feet the flowery ways
Of peace have trod,
Content with creed and garb and phrase :
A harder path in earlier days
Led up to God.

Too cheaply truths, once purchased dear,
Are made our own ;
Too long the world has smiled to hear
Our boast of full corn in the ear
By others sown ;

To see us stir the martyr fires
Of long ago,
And wrap our satisfied desires
In the singed mantles that our sires
Have dropped below.

But now the cross our worthies bore
On us is laid ;

Profession's quiet sleep is o'er,
And in the scale of truth once more
Our faith is weighed.

The cry of innocent blood at last
Is calling down
An answer in the whirlwind-blast,
The thunder and the shadow cast
From Heaven's dark frown.

The land is red with judgments. Who
Stands guiltless forth ?
Have *we* been faithful as we knew,
To God and to our brother true,
To Heaven and Earth ?

How faint, through din of merchandise
And count of gain,
Have seemed to us the captive's cries !
How far away the tears and sighs
Of souls in pain !

This day the fearful reckoning comes
 To each and all ;
We hear amidst our peaceful homes
The summons of the conscript drums,
 The bugle's call.

Our path is plain ; the war-net draws
 Round us in vain,
While, faithful to the Higher Cause,
We keep our fealty to the laws
 Through patient pain.

The levelled gun, the battle brand,
 We may not take ;
But, calmly loyal, we can stand
And suffer with our suffering land
 For conscience' sake.

Why ask for ease where all is pain ?
 Shall *we* alone

Be left to add our gain to gain,
When over Armageddon's plain
The trump is blown ?

To suffer well is well to serve ;
Safe in our Lord
The rigid lines of law shall curve
To spare us ; from our heads shall swerve
Its smiting sword.

And light is mingled with the gloom,
And joy with grief ;
Divinest compensations come,
Through thorns of judgment mercies bloom
In sweet relief.

Thanks for our privilege to bless,
By word and deed,
The widow in her keen distress,
The childless and the fatherless,
The hearts that bleed !

For fields of duty, opening wide,
Where all our powers
Are tasked the eager steps to guide
Of millions on a path untried :

THE SLAVE IS OURS !

Ours by traditions dear and old,
Which make the race
Our wards to cherish and uphold,
And cast their freedom in the mould
Of Christian grace.

And we may tread the sick-bed floors
Where strong men pine,
And, down the groaning corridors,
Pour freely from our liberal stores
The oil and wine.

Who murmurs that in these dark days
His lot is cast ?

God's hand within the shadow lays
The stones whereon His gates of praise
Shall rise at last.

Turn and o'erturn, O outstretched Hand !
Nor stint, nor stay ;
The years have never dropped their sand
On mortal issue vast and grand
As ours to-day.

Already, on the sable ground
Of man's despair
Is Freedom's glorious picture found
With all its dusky hands unbound
Upraised in prayer.

O, small shall seem all sacrifice
And pain and loss,
When God shall wipe the weeping eyes,
For suffering give the victor's prize,
The crown for cross !



AT PORT ROYAL.

THE tent-lights glimmer on the land,
The ship-lights on the sea ;
The night-wind smooths with drifting sand
Our track on lone Tybee.

At last our grating keels outslide,
Our good boats forward swing ;
And while we ride the land-locked tide,
Our negroes row and sing.

For dear the bondman holds his gifts
Of music and of song :
The gold that kindly Nature sifts
Among his sands of wrong ;

The power to make his toiling days
And poor home-comforts please ;
The quaint relief of mirth that plays
With sorrow's minor keys.

Another glow than sunset's fire
Has filled the West with light,
Where field and garner, barn and byre
Are blazing through the night.

The land is wild with fear and hate,
The rout runs mad and fast ;
From hand to hand, from gate to gate,
The flaming brand is passed.

The lurid glow falls strong across
Dark faces broad with smiles :
Not theirs the terror, hate, and loss
That fire yon blazing piles.

With oar-strokes timing to their song,
They weave in simple lays
The pathos of remembered wrong,
The hope of better days, —

The triumph-note that Miriam sung,
The joy of uncaged birds :
Softening with Afric's mellow tongue
Their broken Saxon words.

SONG OF THE NEGRO BOATMEN.

O, praise an' tanks ! De Lord he come
To set de people free ;
An' massa tink it day ob doom,
An' we ob jubilee.
De Lord dat heap de Red Sea waves
He jus' as 'trong as den ;

He say de word : we las' night slaves ;

To-day, de Lord's freemen.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

We 'll hab de rice an' corn ;

O nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn !

Ole massa on he trabbels gone ;

He leaf de land behind :

De Lord's breff blow him funder on,

Like corn-shuck in de wind.

We own de hoe, we own de plough,

We own de hands dat hold ;

We sell de pig, we sell de cow,

But nebber chile be sold.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

We 'll hab de rice an' corn :

O nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn !

We pray de Lord : he gib us signs

Dat some day we be free ;

De Norf-wind tell it to de pines,

De wild-duck to de sea ;

We tink it when de church-bell ring,

We dream it in de dream ;

De rice-bird mean it when he sing,

De eagle when he scream.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

We 'll hab de rice an' corn :

O nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn !

We know de promise nebber fail,

An' nebber lie de word ;

So, like de 'postles in de jail,

We waited for de Lord :

An' now he open ebery door.

An' trow away de key ;

He tink we lub him so before,

We lub him better free.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

He 'll gib de rice an' corn :

O nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn !

So sing our dusky gondoliers ;

And with a secret pain,

And smiles that seem akin to tears,

We hear the wild refrain.

We dare not share the negro's trust,

Nor yet his hope deny ;

We only know that God is just,

And every wrong shall die.

Rude seems the song ; each swarthy face,

Flame-lighted, ruder still :

We start to think that hapless race
Must shape our good or ill ;

That laws of changeless justice bind
Oppressor with oppressed ;
And, close as sin and suffering joined,
We march to Fate abreast.

Sing on, poor hearts ! your chant shall be
Our sign of blight or bloom, —
The Vala-song of Liberty,
Or death-rune of our doom !





BARBARA FRIETCHIE.

UP from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple- and peach-tree fruited deep,

Fair as a garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain wall,—

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind : the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten ;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down ;

In her attic-window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced : the old flag met his sight.

“ Halt ! ” — the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
“ Fire ! ” — out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash ;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf ;

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

“ Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country’s flag,” she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came ;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word :

“ Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog ! March on ! ” he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet :

All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well ;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honor to her ! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave !

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law ;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town !





HOME BALLADS.





COBBLER KEEZAR'S VISION.*

THE beaver cut his timber
With patient teeth that day,
The minks were fish-wards, and the crows
Surveyors of highway, —

When Keezar sat on the hillside
Upon his cobbler's form,
With a pan of coals on either hand
To keep his waxed-ends warm.

* This ballad was written on the occasion of a Horticultural Festival. Cobbler Keezar was a noted character among the first settlers in the valley of the Merrimack.

And there, in the golden weather,
He stitched and hammered and sung ;
In the brook he moistened his leather,
In the pewter mug his tongue

Well knew the tough old Teuton
Who brewed the stoutest ale,
And he paid the good-wife's reckoning
In the coin of song and tale.

The songs they still are singing
Who dress the hills of vine,
The tales that haunt the Brocken
And whisper down the Rhine.

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,
The swift stream wound away,
Through birches and scarlet maples
Flashing in foam and spray, —

Down on the sharp-horned ledges
Plunging in steep cascade,
Tossing its white-maned waters
Against the hemlock's shade.

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,
East and west and north and south ;
Only the village of fishers
Down at the river's mouth ;

Only here and there a clearing,
With its farm-house rude and new,
And tree-stumps, swart as Indians,
Where the scanty harvest grew.

No shout of home-bound reapers,
No vintage-song he heard,
And on the green no dancing feet
The merry violin stirred.

“ Why should folk be glum,” said Keezar,
“ When Nature herself is glad,
And the painted woods are laughing
At the faces so sour and sad ? ”

Small heed had the careless cobbler
What sorrow of heart was theirs
Who travailed in pain with the births of God,
And planted a state with prayers, —

Hunting of witches and warlocks,
Smiting the heathen horde, —
One hand on the mason’s trowel,
And one on the soldier’s sword !

But give him his ale and cider,
Give him his pipe and song,
Little he cared for church or state,
Or the balance of right and wrong.

“ ’T is work, work, work,” he muttered, —

“ And for rest a snuffle of psalms ! ”

He smote on his leathern apron

With his brown and waxen palms.

“ O for the purple harvests

Of the days when I was young !

For the merry grape-stained maidens,

And the pleasant songs they sung !

“ O for the breath of vineyards,

Of apples and nuts and wine !

For an oar to row and a breeze to blow

Down the grand old river Rhine ! ”

A tear in his blue eye glistened

And dropped on his beard so gray.

“ Old, old am I,” said Keezar,

“ And the Rhine flows far away ! ”

But a cunning man was the cobbler ;
He could call the birds from the trees,
Charm the black snake out of the ledges,
And bring back the swarming bees.

All the virtues of herbs and metals,
All the lore of the woods, he knew,
And the arts of the Old World mingled
With the marvels of the New.

Well he knew the tricks of magic,
And the lapstone on his knee
Had the gift of the Mormon's goggles
Or the stone of Doctor Dee.

For the mighty master Agrippa
Wrought it with spell and rhyme
From a fragment of mystic moonstone
In the tower of Nettesheim.

To a cobbler Minnesinger

The marvellous stone gave he, —
And he gave it, in turn, to Keezar,
Who brought it over the sea.

He held up that mystic lapstone,
He held it up like a lens,
And he counted the long years coming
By twenties and by tens.

“One hundred years,” quoth Keezar,
“And fifty have I told :
Now open the new before me,
And shut me out the old !”

Like a cloud of mist, the blackness
Rolled from the magic stone,
And a marvellous picture mingled
The unknown and the known.

Still ran the stream to the river,
And river and ocean joined ;
And there were the bluffs and the blue sea-line,
And cold north hills behind.

But the mighty forest was broken
By many a steepled town,
By many a white-walled farm-house,
And many a garner brown.

Turning a score of mill-wheels,
The stream no more ran free ;
White sails on the winding river,
White sails on the far-off sea.

Below in the noisy village
The flags were floating gay,
And shone on a thousand faces
The light of a holiday.

Swiftly the rival ploughmen

Turned the brown earth from their shares ;

Here were the farmer's treasures,

There were the craftsman's wares.

Golden the good-wife's butter,

Ruby her currant-wine ;

Grand were the strutting turkeys,

Fat were the beeves and swine.

Yellow and red were the apples,

And the ripe pears russet-brown,

And the peaches had stolen blushes

From the girls who shook them down.

And with blooms of hill and wild-wood,

That shame the toil of art,

Mingled the gorgeous blossoms

Of the garden's tropic heart.

“What is it I see ?” said Keezar :

“Am I here, or am I there ?

Is it a fête at Bingen ?

Do I look on Frankfort fair ?

“But where are the clowns and puppets,

And imps with horns and tail ?

And where are the Rhenish flagons ?

And where is the foaming ale ?

“Strange things, I know, will happen, —

Strange things the Lord permits ;

But that doughty folk should be jolly

Puzzles my poor old wits.

“Here are smiling manly faces,

And the maiden’s step is gay ;

Nor sad by thinking, nor mad by drinking,

Nor mopes, nor fools, are they.

“ Here ’s pleasure without regretting,
And good without abuse,
The holiday and the bridal
Of beauty and of use.

“ Here ’s a priest and there is a quaker, —
Do the cat and the dog agree ?
Have they burned the stocks for oven-wood ?
Have they cut down the gallows-tree ?

“ Would the old folk know their children ?
Would they own the graceless town,
With never a ranter to worry
And never a witch to drown ? ”

Loud laughed the cobbler Keezar,
Laughed like a school-boy gay ;
Tossing his arms above him,
The lapstone rolled away.

It rolled down the rugged hillside,
It spun like a wheel bewitched,
It plunged through the leaning willows,
And into the river pitched.

There, in the deep, dark water,
The magic stone lies still,
Under the leaning willows
In the shadow of the hill.

But oft the idle fisher
Sits on the shadowy bank,
And his dreams make marvellous pictures
Where the wizard's lapstone sank.

And still, in the summer twilights,
When the river seems to run
Out from the inner glory,
Warm with the melted sun,

The weary mill-girl lingers
Beside the charmèd stream,
And the sky and the golden water
Shape and color her dream.

Fair wave the sunset gardens,
The rosy signals fly ;
Her homestead beckons from the cloud,
And love goes sailing by !





AMY WENTWORTH.

To W. B.

AS they who watch by sick-beds find relief
Unwittingly from the great stress of
grief

And anxious care in fantasies outwrought
From the hearth's embers flickering low, or
caught

From whispering wind, or tread of passing feet,
Or vagrant memory calling up some sweet
Snatch of old song or romance, whence or why
They scarcely know or ask, — so, thou and I,
Nursed in the faith that Truth alone is strong
In the endurance which outwearies Wrong,

With meek persistence baffling brutal force,
And trusting God against the universe, —
We, doomed to watch a strife we may not share
With other weapons than the patriot's prayer,
Yet owning, with full hearts and moistened eyes,
The awful beauty of self-sacrifice,
And wrung by keenest sympathy for all
Who give their loved ones for the living wall
'Twixt law and treason, — in this evil day
May haply find, through automatic play
Of pen and pencil, solace to our pain,
And hearten others with the strength we gain.
I know it has been said our times require
No play of art, nor dalliance with the lyre,
No weak essay with Fancy's chloroform
To calm the hot, mad pulses of the storm,
But the stern war-blast rather, such as sets
The battle's teeth of serried bayonets,
And pictures grim as Vernet's. Yet with these
Some softer tints may blend, and milder keys

Relieve the storm-stunned ear. Let us keep
sweet,

If so we may, our hearts, even while we eat
The bitter harvest of our own device
And half a century's moral cowardice.
As Nürnberg sang while Wittenberg defied,
And Kranach painted by his Luther's side,
And through the war-march of the Puritan
The silver stream of Marvell's music ran,
So let the household melodies be sung,
The pleasant pictures on the wall be hung, —
So let us hold against the hosts of night
And slavery all our vantage-ground of light.
Let Treason boast its savagery, and shake
From its flag-folds its symbol rattlesnake,
Nurse its fine arts, lay human skins in tan,
And carve its pipe-bowls from the bones of man,
And make the tale of Fijian banquets dull
By drinking whiskey from a loyal skull, —
But let us guard, till this sad war shall cease,

(God grant it soon!) the graceful arts of peace :
No foes are conquered who the victors teach
Their vandal manners and barbaric speech.

And while, with hearts of thankfulness, we bear
Of the great common burden our full share,
Let none upbraid us that the waves entice
Thy sea-dipped pencil, or some quaint device,
Rhythmic and sweet, beguiles my pen away
From the sharp strifes and sorrows of to-day.
Thus, while the east-wind keen from Labrador
Sings in the leafless elms, and from the shore
Of the great sea comes the monotonous roar
Of the long-breaking surf, and all the sky
Is gray with cloud, home-bound and dull, I try
To time a simple legend to the sounds
Of winds in the woods, and waves on pebbled
bounds, —

A song for oars to chime with, such as might
Be sung by tired sea-painters, who at night

Look from their hemlock camps, by quiet cove
Or beach, moon-lighted, on the waves they love.
(So hast thou looked, when level sunset lay
On the calm bosom of some Eastern bay,
And all the spray-moist rocks and waves that
 rolled
Up the white sand-slopes flashed with ruddy gold.)
Something it has — a flavor of the sea,
And the sea's freedom — which reminds of thee.
Its faded picture, dimly smiling down
From the blurred fresco of the ancient town,
I have not touched with warmer tints in vain,
If, in this dark, sad year, it steals one thought
 from pain.

HER fingers shame the ivory keys
 They dance so light along ;
The bloom upon her parted lips
 Is sweeter than the song.

O perfumed suitor, spare thy smiles !

Her thoughts are not of thee ;

She better loves the salted wind,

The voices of the sea.

Her heart is like an outbound ship

That at its anchor swings ;

The murmur of the stranded shell

Is in the song she sings.

She sings, and, smiling, hears her praise,

But dreams the while of one

Who watches from his sea-blown deck

The icebergs in the sun.

She questions all the winds that blow,

And every fog-wreath dim,

And bids the sea-birds flying north

Bear messages to him.

She speeds them with the thanks of men
 He perilled life to save,
And grateful prayers like holy oil
 To smooth for him the wave.

Brown Viking of the fishing-smack !
 Fair toast of all the town ! —
The skipper's jerkin ill beseems
 The lady's silken gown !

But ne'er shall Amy Wentworth wear
 For him the blush of shame
Who dares to set his manly gifts
 Against her ancient name.

The stream is brightest at its spring,
 And blood is not like wine ;
Nor honored less than he who heirs
 Is he who founds a line.

Full lightly shall the prize be won,
If love be Fortune's spur ;
And never maiden stoops to him
Who lifts himself to her.

Her home is brave in Jaffrey Street,
With stately stairways worn
By feet of old Colonial knights
And ladies gentle-born.

Still green about its ample porch
The English ivy twines,
Trained back to show in English oak
The herald's carven signs.

And on her, from the wainscot old,
Ancestral faces frown, —
And this has worn the soldier's sword,
And that the judge's gown.

But, strong of will and proud as they,
 She walks the gallery floor
As if she trod her sailor's deck
 By stormy Labrador!

The sweetbrier blooms on Kittery-side,
 And green are Elliot's bowers ;
Her garden is the pebbled beach,
 The mosses are her flowers.

She looks across the harbor-bar
 To see the white gulls fly ;
His greeting from the Northern sea
 Is in their clanging cry.

She hums a song, and dreams that he,
 As in its romance old,
Shall homeward ride with silken sails
 And masts of beaten gold !

O rank is good, and gold is fair,
And high and low mate ill ;
But love has never known a law
Beyond its own sweet will !





THE COUNTESS.

TO E. W.

I KNOW not, Time and Space so intervene,
Whether, still waiting with a trust serene,
Thou bearest up thy fourscore years and ten,
Or, called at last, art now Heaven's citizen ;
But, here or there, a pleasant thought of thee,
Like an old friend, all day has been with me.
The shy, still boy, for whom thy kindly hand
Smoothed his hard pathway to the wonder-land
Of thought and fancy, in gray manhood yet
Keeps green the memory of his early debt.
To-day, when truth and falsehood speak their
words
Through hot-lipped cannon and the teeth of
swords,

Listening with quickened heart and ear intent
To each sharp clause of that stern argument,
I still can hear at times a softer note
Of the old pastoral music round me float,
While through the hot gleam of our civil strife
Looms the green mirage of a simpler life.
As, at his alien post, the sentinel
Drops the old bucket in the homestead well,
And hears old voices in the winds that toss
Above his head the live-oak's beard of moss,
So, in our trial-time, and under skies
Shadowed by swords like Islam's paradise,
I wait and watch, and let my fancy stray
To milder scenes and youth's Arcadian day ;
And howsoe'er the pencil dipped in dreams
Shades the brown woods or tints the sunset
streams,
The country doctor in the foreground seems,
Whose ancient sulky down the village lanes
Dragged, like a war-car, captive ills and pains.

I could not paint the scenery of my song,
Mindless of one who looked thereon so long ;
Who, night and day, on duty's lonely round,
Made friends o' the woods and rocks, and knew
the sound

Of each small brook, and what the hillside trees
Said to the winds that touched their leafy keys ;
Who saw so keenly and so well could paint
The village-folk, with all their humors quaint, —
The parson ambling on his wall-eyed roan,
Grave and erect, with white hair backward
blown ;

The tough old boatman, half amphibious grown ;
The muttering witch-wife of the gossip's tale,
And the loud straggler levying his black mail, —
Old customs, habits, superstitions, fears,
All that lies buried under fifty years.
To thee, as is most fit, I bring my lay,
And, grateful, own the debt I cannot pay.

OVER the wooded northern ridge,
Between its houses brown,
To the dark tunnel of the bridge
The street comes straggling down.

You catch a glimpse through birch and pine
Of gable, roof, and porch,
The tavern with its swinging sign,
The sharp horn of the church.

The river's steel-blue crescent curves
To meet, in ebb and flow,
The single broken wharf that serves
For sloop and gundelow.

With salt sea-scents along its shores
The heavy hay-boats crawl,
The long antennæ of their oars
In lazy rise and fall.

Along the gray abutment's wall
The idle shad-net dries ;
The toll-man in his cobbler's stall
Sits smoking with closed eyes.

You hear the pier's low undertone
Of waves that chafe and gnaw ;
You start, — a skipper's horn is blown
To raise the creaking draw.

At times a blacksmith's anvil sounds
With slow and sluggard beat,
Or stage-coach on its dusty rounds
Wakes up the staring street.

A place for idle eyes and ears,
A cobwebbed nook of dreams ;
Left by the stream whose waves are years
The stranded village seems.

And there, like other moss and rust,
The native dweller clings,
And keeps, in uninquiring trust,
The old, dull round of things.

The fisher drops his patient lines,
The farmer sows his grain,
Content to hear the murmuring pines
Instead of railroad-train.

Go where, along the tangled steep
That slopes against the west,
The hamlet's buried idlers sleep
In still profounder rest.

Throw back the locust's flowery plume,
The birch's pale-green scarf,
And break the web of brier and bloom
From name and epitaph.

A simple muster-roll of death,
Of pomp and romance shorn,
The dry, old names that common breath
Has cheapened and outworn.

Yet pause by one low mound, and part
The wild vines o'er it laced,
And read the words by rustic art
Upon its headstone traced.

Haply yon white-haired villager
Of fourscore years can say
What means the noble name of her
Who sleeps with common clay.

An exile from the Gascon land
Found refuge here and rest,
And loved, of all the village band,
Its fairest and its best.

He knelt with her on Sabbath morn,
He worshipped through her eyes,
And on the pride that doubts and scorns
Stole in her faith's surprise.

Her simple daily life he saw
By homeliest duties tried,
In all things by an untaught law
Of fitness justified.

For her his rank aside he laid ;
He took the hue and tone
Of lowly life and toil, and made
Her simple ways his own.

Yet still, in gay and careless ease,
To harvest-field or dance
He brought the gentle courtesies,
The nameless grace of France.

And she who taught him love not less
From him she loved in turn
Caught in her sweet unconsciousness
What love is quick to learn.

Each grew to each in pleased accord,
Nor knew the gazing town
If she looked upward to her lord
Or he to her looked down.

How sweet, when summer's day was o'er,
His violin's mirth and wail,
The walk on pleasant Newbury's shore,
The river's moonlit sail !

Ah ! life is brief, though love be long ;
The altar and the bier,
The burial hymn and bridal song,
Were both in one short year !

Her rest is quiet on the hill,
 Beneath the locust's bloom ;
Far off her lover sleeps as still
 Within his scutcheoned tomb.

The Gascon lord, the village maid,
 In death still clasp their hands ;
The love that levels rank and grade
 Unites their severed lands.

What matter whose the hillside grave,
 Or whose the blazoned stone ?
Forever to her western wave
 Shall whisper blue Garonne !

O Love ! — so hallowing every soil
 That gives thy sweet flower room,
Wherever, nursed by ease or toil,
 The human heart takes bloom ! —

Plant of lost Eden, from the sod
Of sinful earth unriven,
White blossom of the trees of God
Dropped down to us from heaven! —

This tangled waste of mound and stone
Is holy for thy sake ;
A sweetness which is all thy own
Breathes out from fern and brake.

And while ancestral pride shall twine
The Gascon's tomb with flowers,
Fall sweetly here, O song of mine,
With summer's bloom and showers !

And let the lines that severed seem
Unite again in thee,
As western wave and Gallic stream
Are mingled in one sea !



OCCASIONAL POEMS.





NAPLES.—1860.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT C. WATERSTON, OF BOSTON.

I give thee joy! — I know to thee
The dearest spot on earth must be
Where sleeps thy loved one by the summer sea ;

Where, near her sweetest poet's tomb,
The land of Virgil gave thee room
To lay thy flower with her perpetual bloom.

I know that when the sky shut down
Behind thee on the gleaming town,
On Baiæ's baths and Posilippo's crown ;

And, through thy tears, the mocking day
Burned Ischia's mountain lines away,
And Capri melted in its sunny bay, —

Through thy great farewell sorrow shot
The sharp pang of a bitter thought
That slaves must tread around that holy spot.

Thou knewest not the land was blest
In giving thy beloved rest,
Holding the fond hope closer to her breast

That every sweet and saintly grave
Was freedom's prophecy, and gave
The pledge of Heaven to sanctify and save.

That pledge is answered. To thy ear
The unchained city sends its cheer,
And, tuned to joy, the muffled bells of fear

Ring Victor in. The land sits free
And happy by the summer sea,
And Bourbon Naples now is Italy !

She smiles above her broken chain
The languid smile that follows pain,
Stretching her cramped limbs to the sun again.

O, joy for all, who hear her call
From Camaldoli's convent wall
And Elmo's towers to freedom's carnival !

A new life breathes among her vines
And olives, like the breath of pines
Blown downward from the breezy Apennines.

Lean, O my friend, to meet that breath,
Rejoice as one who witnesseth
Beauty from ashes rise, and life from death !

Thy sorrow shall no more be pain,
Its tears shall fall in sunlit rain,
Writing the grave with flowers: "Arisen again!"





THE SUMMONS.

MY ear is full of summer sounds,
Of summer sights my languid eye;
Beyond the dusty village bounds
I loiter in my daily rounds,
And in the noon-time shadows lie.

I hear the wild bee wind his horn,
The bird swings on the ripened wheat,
The long green lances of the corn
Are tilting in the winds of morn,
The locust shrills his song of heat.

Another sound my spirit hears,
A deeper sound that drowns them all, —

A voice of pleading choked with tears,
The call of human hopes and fears,
The Macedonian cry to Paul !

The storm-bell rings, the trumpet blows ;
I know the word and countersign ;
Wherever Freedom's vanguard goes,
Where stand or fall her friends or foes,
I know the place that should be mine.

Shamed be the hands that idly fold,
And lips that woo the reed's accord,
When laggard Time the hour has tolled
For true with false and new with old
To fight the battles of the Lord !

O brothers ! blest by partial Fate
With power to match the will and deed,
To him your summons comes too late
Who sinks beneath his armor's weight,
And has no answer but God-speed !



THE WAITING

I WAIT and watch : before my eyes
Methinks the night grows thin and gray ;
I wait and watch the eastern skies
To see the golden spears arise
Beneath the oriflamme of day !

Like one whose limbs are bound in trance
I hear the day sounds swell and grow,
And see across the twilight glance,
Troop after troop, in swift advance,
The shining ones with plumes of snow !

I know the errand of their feet,
I know what mighty work is theirs ;

I can but lift up hands unmeet,
The threshing-floors of God to beat,
And speed them with unworthy prayers.

I will not dream in vain despair
The steps of progress wait for me :
The puny leverage of a hair
The planet's impulse well may spare,
A drop of dew the tided sea.

The loss, if loss there be, is mine,
And yet not mine if understood ;
For one shall grasp and one resign,
One drink life's rue, and one its wine,
And God shall make the balance good.

O power to do ! O baffled will !
O prayer and action ! ye are one ;
Who may not strive, may yet fulfil
The harder task of standing still,
And good but wished with God is done !



MOUNTAIN PICTURES.

I.

FRANCONIA FROM THE PEMIGEWASSET.

ONCE more, O Mountains of the North,
unveil

Your brows, and lay your cloudy mantles by !
And once more, ere the eyes that seek ye fail,
Uplift against the blue walls of the sky
Your mighty shapes, and let the sunshine weave
Its golden network in your belting woods,
Smile down in rainbows from your falling
floods,
And on your kingly brows at morn and eve
Set crowns of fire ! So shall my soul receive

Haply the secret of your calm and strength,
Your unforgotten beauty interfuse
My common life, your glorious shapes and
hues
And sun-dropped splendors at my bidding
come,
Loom vast through dreams, and stretch in
billowy length
From the sea-level of my lowland home !

They rise before me ! Last night's thunder-gust
Roared not in vain : for where its lightnings
thrust
Their tongues of fire, the great peaks seem so
near,
Burned clean of mist, so starkly bold and clear,
I almost pause the wind in the pines to hear,
The loose rock's fall, the steps of browsing deer.
The clouds that shattered on yon slide-worn
walls

And splintered on the rocks their spears of
rain

Have set in play a thousand waterfalls,
Making the dusk and silence of the woods
Glad with the laughter of the chasing floods,
And luminous with blown spray and silver
gleams,

While, in the vales below, the dry-lipped streams
Sing to the freshened meadow-lands again.

So, let me hope, the battle-storm that beats
The land with hail and fire may pass away
With its spent thunders at the break of day,
Like last night's clouds, and leave, as it retreats,
A greener earth and fairer sky behind,
Blown crystal-clear by Freedom's Northern
wind!

II.

MONADNOCK FROM WACHUSET.

I WOULD I were a painter, for the sake
Of a sweet picture, and of her who led
A fitting guide, with reverential tread,
Into that mountain mystery. First a lake
Tinted with sunset ; next the wavy lines
Of far receding hills ; and yet more far,
Monadnock lifting from his night of pines
His rosy forehead to the evening star.
Beside us, purple-zoned, Wachuset laid
His head against the West, whose warm light
made
His aureole ; and o'er him, sharp and clear,
Like a shaft of lightning in mid-launching stayed,
A single level cloud-line, shone upon
By the fierce glances of the sunken sun,
Menaced the darkness with its golden spear !

So twilight deepened round us. Still and black
The great woods climbed the mountain at our
back ;

And on their skirts, where yet the lingering day
On the shorn greenness of the clearing lay,
The brown old farm-house like a bird's nest
hung.

With home-life sounds the desert air was stirred :
The bleat of sheep along the hill we heard,
The bucket plashing in the cool, sweet well,
The pasture-bars that clattered as they fell ;
Dogs barked, fowls fluttered, cattle lowed ; the
gate

Of the barn-yard creaked beneath the merry
weight

Of sun-brown children, listening, while they
swung,

The welcome sound of supper-call to hear ;
And down the shadowy lane, in tinklings
clear,

The pastoral curfew of the cow-bell rung.
Thus soothed and pleased, our backward path
we took,

Praising the farmer's home. He only spake,
Looking into the sunset o'er the lake,

Like one to whom the far-off is most near :
" Yes, most folks think it has a pleasant look ;
I love it for my good old mother's sake,
Who lived and died here in the peace of
God ! "

The lesson of his words we pondered o'er,
As silently we turned the eastern flank
Of the mountain, where its shadow deepest
sank,

Doubling the night along our rugged road :

We felt that man was more than his abode, —

The inward life than Nature's raiment more ;
And the warm sky, the sundown-tinted hill,

The forest and the lake, seemed dwarfed and
dim

Before the saintly soul, whose human will
 Meekly in the Eternal footsteps trod,
Making her homely toil and household ways
An earthly echo of the song of praise
 Swelling from angel lips and harps of seraphim!





OUR RIVER.

FOR A SUMMER FESTIVAL AT "THE LAURELS"
ON THE MERRIMACK.

ONCE more on yonder laurelled height
The summer flowers have budded ;
Once more with summer's golden light
The vales of home are flooded ;
And once more, by the grace of Him
Of every good the Giver,
We sing upon its wooded rim
The praises of our river :

Its pines above, its waves below,
The west wind down it blowing,

As fair as when the young Brissot
Beheld it seaward flowing, —
And bore its memory o'er the deep,
To soothe a martyr's sadness,
And fresco, in his troubled sleep,
His prison-walls with gladness.

We know the world is rich with streams
Renowned in song and story,
Whose music murmurs through our dreams
Of human love and glory :
We know that Arno's banks are fair,
And Rhine has castled shadows,
And, poet-tuned, the Doon and Ayr
Go singing down their meadows.

But while, unpictured and unsung
By painter or by poet,
Our river waits the tuneful tongue
And cunning hand to show it, —

We only know the fond skies lean
Above it, warm with blessing,
And the sweet soul of our Undine
Awakes to our caressing.

No fickle Sun-God holds the flocks
That graze its shores in keeping ;
No icy kiss of Dian mocks
The youth beside it sleeping :
Our Christian river loveth most
The beautiful and human ;
The heathen streams of Naiads boast,
But ours of man and women.

The miner in his cabin hears
The ripple we are hearing ;
It whispers soft to homesick ears
Around the settler's clearing :
In Sacramento's vales of corn,
Or Santee's bloom of cotton,

Our river by its valley-born
Was never yet forgotten.

The drum rolls loud, — the bugle fills
The summer air with clangor ;
The war-storm shakes the solid hills
Beneath its tread of anger :
Young eyes that last year smiled in ours
Now point the rifle's barrel,
And hands then stained with fruits and flowers
Bear redder stains of quarrel.

But blue skies smile, and flowers bloom on,
And rivers still keep flowing, —
The dear God still his rain and sun
On good and ill bestowing.
His pine-trees whisper, " Trust and wait ! "
His flowers are prophesying
That all we dread of change or fate
His love is underlying.

And thou, O Mountain-born ! — no more
We ask the wise Allotter
Than for the firmness of thy shore,
The calmness of thy water,
The cheerful lights that overlay
Thy rugged slopes with beauty,
To match our spirits to our day
And make a joy of duty.





ANDREW RYKMAN'S PRAYER.

ANDREW RYKMAN's dead and gone :
A You can see his leaning slate
In the graveyard, and thereon
Read his name and date.

" Trust is truer than our fears,"
Runs the legend through the moss,
" Gain is not in added years,
Nor in death is loss."

Still the feet that thither trod,
All the friendly eyes are dim ;
Only Nature, now, and God
Have a care for him.

There the dews of quiet fall,
Singing birds and soft winds stray:
Shall the tender Heart of all
Be less kind than they ?

What he was and what he is
They who ask may haply find,
If they read this prayer of his
Which he left behind.

Pardon, Lord, the lips that dare
Shape in words a mortal's prayer !
Prayer, that, when my day is done,
And I see its setting sun,
Shorn and beamless, cold and dim,
Sink beneath the horizon's rim, —
When this ball of rock and clay
Crumbles from my feet away,
And the solid shores of sense

Melt into the vague immense,
Father ! I may come to Thee
Even with the beggar's plea,
As the poorest of Thy poor,
With my needs, and nothing more.

Not as one who seeks his home
With a step assured I come ;
Still behind the tread I hear
Of my life-companion, Fear ;
Still a shadow deep and vast
From my westering feet is cast,
Wavering, doubtful, undefined,
Never shapen nor outlined :
From myself the fear has grown,
And the shadow is my own.
Yet, O Lord, through all a sense
Of Thy tender providence
Stays my failing heart on Thee,
And confirms the feeble knee ;

And, at times, my worn feet press
Spaces of cool quietness,
Lilied whiteness shone upon
Not by light of moon or sun.
Hours there be of inmost calm,
Broken but by grateful psalm,
When I love Thee more than fear Thee,
And Thy blessed Christ seems near me,
With forgiving look, as when
He beheld the Magdalen.
Well I know that all things move
To the spherical rhythm of love, —
That to Thee, O Lord of all!
Nothing can of chance befall:
Child and seraph, mote and star,
Well Thou knowest what we are;
Through Thy vast creative plan
Looking, from the worm to man,
There is pity in Thine eyes,
But no hatred nor surprise.

Not in blind caprice of will,
Not in cunning sleight of skill,
Not for show of power, was wrought
Nature's marvel in Thy thought.
Never careless hand and vain
Smites these chords of joy and pain ;
No immortal selfishness
Plays the game of curse and bless :
Heaven and earth are witnesses
That Thy glory goodness is.
Not for sport of mind and force
Hast Thou made Thy universe,
But as atmosphere and zone
Of Thy loving heart alone.
Man, who walketh in a show,
Sees before him, to and fro,
Shadow and illusion go ;
All things flow and fluctuate,
Now contract and now dilate.
In the welter of this sea,

Nothing stable is but Thee ;
In this whirl of swooning trance,
Thou alone art permanence ;
All without Thee only seems,
All beside is choice of dreams.
Never yet in darkest mood
Doubted I that Thou wast good,
Nor mistook my will for fate,
Pain of sin for heavenly hate, —
Never dreamed the gates of pearl
Rise from out the burning marl,
Or that good can only live
Of the bad conservative,
And through counterpoise of hell
Heaven alone be possible.

For myself alone I doubt ;
All is well, I know, without ;
I alone the beauty mar,
I alone the music jar.

Yet, with hands by evil stained,
And an ear by discord pained,
I am groping for the keys
Of the heavenly harmonies ;
Still within my heart I bear
Love for all things good and fair.
Hands of want or souls in pain
Have not sought my door in vain ;
I have kept my fealty good
To the human brotherhood ;
Scarcely have I asked in prayer
That which others might not share.
I, who hear with secret shame
Praise that paineth more than blame,
Rich alone in favors lent,
Virtuous by accident,
Doubtful where I fain would rest,
Frailest where I seem the best,
Only strong for lack of test, —
What am I, that I should press

Special pleas of selfishness,
Coolly mounting into heaven
On my neighbor unforgiven ?
Ne'er to me, howe'er disguised,
Comes a saint unrecognized ;
Never fails my heart to greet
Noble deed with warmer beat ;
Halt and maimed, I own not less
All the grace of holiness ;
Nor, through shame or self-distrust,
Less I love the pure and just.
Lord, forgive these words of mine :
What have I that is not Thine ? —
Whatsoe'er I fain would boast
Needs Thy pitying pardon most.
Thou, O Elder Brother ! who
In Thy flesh our trial knew,
Thou, who hast been touched by these
Our most sad infirmities,
Thou alone the gulf canst span

In the dual heart of man,
And between the soul and sense
Reconcile all difference,
Change the dream of me and mine
For the truth of Thee and Thine,
And, through chaos, doubt, and strife,
Interfuse Thy calm of life.
Haply, thus by Thee renewed,
In Thy borrowed goodness good,
Some sweet morning yet in God's
Dim, æonian periods,
Joyful I shall wake to see
Those I love who rest in Thee,
And to them in Thee allied
Shall my soul be satisfied.

Scarcely Hope hath shaped for me
What the future life may be.
Other lips may well be bold ;
Like the publican of old,

I can only urge the plea,
“ Lord, be merciful to me ! ”
Nothing of desert I claim,
Unto me belongeth shame.
Not for me the crowns of gold,
Palms, and harpings manifold ;
Not for erring eye and feet
Jasper wall and golden street.
What Thou wilt, O Father, give !
All is gain that I receive.
If my voice I may not raise
In the elders’ song of praise,
If I may not, sin-defiled,
Claim my birthright as a child,
Suffer it that I to Thee
As an hired servant be ;
Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful, so the work be Thine ;
Let me find the humblest place
In the shadow of Thy grace :

Blest to me were any spot
Where temptation whispers not.
If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on ;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain^d would do ;
Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant ;
Let me find in Thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy ;
Out of self to love be led
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude.

So we read the prayer of him
Who, with John of Labadie,

Trod, of old, the oozy rim
Of the Zuyder Zee.

Thus did Andrew Rykman pray,
Are we wiser, better grown,
That we may not, in our day,
Make his prayer our own ?





THE CRY OF A LOST SOUL.*

IN that black forest, where, when day is
done,
With a snake's stillness glides the Amazon
Darkly from sunset to the rising sun,

A cry, as of the pained heart of the wood,
The long, despairing moan of solitude
And darkness and the absence of all good,

* Lieut. Herndon's Report of the Exploration of the Amazon has a striking description of the peculiar and melancholy notes of a bird heard by night on the shores of the river. The Indian guides called it "The Cry of a lost Soul"!

Startles the traveller, with a sound so drear,
So full of hopeless agony and fear,
His heart stands still and listens like his ear.

The guide, as if he heard a dead-bell toll,
Starts, drops his oar against the gunwale's thole,
Crosses himself, and whispers, "A lost soul!"

"No, Señor, not a bird. I know it well,—
It is the pained soul of some infidel
Or curséd heretic that cries from hell.

"Poor fool! with hope still mocking his despair,
He wanders, shrieking on the midnight air
For human pity and for Christian prayer.

"Saints strike him dumb! Our Holy Mother
hath

No prayer for him who, sinning unto death,
Burns always in the furnace of God's wrath!"

Thus to the baptized pagan's cruel lie,
Lending new horror to that mournful cry,
The voyager listens, making no reply.

Dim burns the boat-lamp: shadows deepen
round,
From giant trees with snakelike creepers wound,
And the black water glides without a sound.

But in the traveller's heart a secret sense
Of nature plastic to benign intents,
And an eternal good in Providence,

Lifts to the starry calm of heaven his eyes ;
And lo ! rebuking all earth's ominous cries,
The Cross of pardon lights the tropic skies !

“ Father of all ! ” he urges his strong plea,
“ Thou lovest all : thy erring child may be
Lost to himself, but never lost to Thee !

“ All souls are Thine ; the wings of morning
bear

None from that Presence which is everywhere,
Nor hell itself can hide, for Thou art there.

“ Through sins of sense, perversities of will,
Through doubt and pain, through guilt and
shame and ill,
Thy pitying eye is on Thy creature still.

“ Wilt thou not make, Eternal Source and Goal !
In Thy long years, life's broken circle whole,
And change to praise the cry of a lost soul ? ”





ITALY.

A CROSS the sea I heard the groans
Of nations in the intervals
Of wind and wave. Their blood and bones
Cried out in torture, crushed by thrones,
And sucked by priestly cannibals.

I dreamed of freedom slowly gained
By martyr meekness, patience, faith.
And lo! an athlete grimly stained,
With corded muscles battle-strained,
Shouting it from the fields of death!

I turn me, awe-struck, from the sight,
Among the clamoring thousands mute,
I only know that God is right,
And that the children of the light
Shall tread the darkness under foot.

I know the pent fire heaves its crust,
That sultry skies the bolt will form
To smite them clear ; that Nature must
The balance of her powers adjust,
Though with the earthquake and the storm.

God reigns, and let the earth rejoice !
I bow before His sterner plan.
Dumb are the organs of my choice ;
He speaks in battle's stormy voice,
His praise is in the wrath of man !

Yet, surely as He lives, the day
Of peace He promised shall be ours,
To fold the flags of war, and lay
Its sword and spear to rust away,
And sow its ghastly fields with flowers !





THE RIVER PATH.

NO bird-song floated down the hill,
The tangled bank below was still ;

No rustle from the birchen stem,
No ripple from the water's hem.

The dusk of twilight round us grew,
We felt the falling of the dew ;

For, from us, ere the day was done,
The wooded hills shut out the sun.

But on the river's farther side
We saw the hill-tops glorified, —

A tender glow, exceeding fair,
A dream of day without its glare.

With us the damp, the chill, the gloom :
With them the sunset's rosy bloom ;

While dark, through willowy vistas seen,
The river rolled in shade between.

From out the darkness where we trod
We gazed upon those hills of God,

Whose light seemed not of moon or sun.
We spake not, but our thought was one.

We paused, as if from that bright shore
Beckoned our dear ones gone before ;

And stilled our beating hearts to hear
The voices lost to mortal ear !

Sudden our pathway turned from night ;
The hills swung open to the light ;

Through their green gates the sunshine showed,
A long, slant splendor downward flowed.

Down glade and glen and bank it rolled ;
It bridged the shaded stream with gold ;

And, borne on piers of mist, allied
The shadowy with the sunlit side !

“ So,” prayed we, “ when our feet draw near
The river, dark with mortal fear,

“ And the night cometh chill with dew,
O Father ! — let thy light break through !

“ So let the hills of doubt divide,
So bridge with faith the sunless tide !

“ So let the eyes that fail on earth
On thy eternal hills look forth ;

“ And in thy beckoning angels know
The dear ones whom we loved below ! ”





A MEMORIAL.

M. A. C.

O thicker, deeper, darker growing,
The solemn vista to the tomb
Must know henceforth another shadow,
And give another cypress room.

In love surpassing that of brothers,
We walked, O friend, from childhood's day;
And, looking back o'er fifty summers,
Our foot-prints track a common way.

One in our faith, and one our longing
To make the world within our reach
Somewhat the better for our living,
And gladder for our human speech.

Thou heardst with me the far-off voices,
The old beguiling song of fame,
But life to thee was warm and present,
And love was better than a name.

To homely joys and loves and friendships
Thy genial nature fondly clung ;
And so the shadow on the dial
Ran back and left thee always young.

And who could blame the generous weakness
Which, only to thyself unjust,
So overprized the worth of others,
And dwarfed thy own with self-distrust ?

All hearts grew warmer in the presence
Of one who, seeking not his own,
Gave freely for the love of giving,
Nor reaped for self the harvest sown.

Thy greeting smile was pledge and prelude
Of generous deeds and kindly words ;
In thy large heart were fair guest-chambers,
Open to sunrise and the birds !

The task was thine to mould and fashion
Life's plastic newness into grace ;
To make the boyish heart heroic,
And light with thought the maiden's face.

O'er all the land, in town and prairie,
With bended heads of mourning, stand
The living forms that owe their beauty
And fitness to thy shaping hand.

Thy call has come in ripened manhood,
The noonday calm of heart and mind,
While I, who dreamed of thy remaining
To mourn me, linger still behind :

Live on, to own, with self-upbraiding,
A debt of love still due from me, —
The vain remembrance of occasions,
Forever lost, of serving thee.

It was not mine among thy kindred
To join the silent funeral prayers,
But all that long sad day of summer
My tears of mourning dropped with theirs.

All day the sea-waves sobbed with sorrow,
The birds forgot their merry trills ;
All day I heard the pines lamenting
With thine upon thy homestead hills.

Green be those hillside pines forever,
And green the meadowy lowlands be,
And green the old memorial beeches,
Name-carven in the woods of Lee!

Still let them greet thy life companions
Who thither turn their pilgrim feet,
In every mossy line recalling
A tender memory sadly sweet.

O friend! if thought and sense avail not
To know thee henceforth as thou art,
That all is well with thee forever
I trust the instincts of my heart.

Thine be the quiet habitations,
Thine the green pastures, blossom-sown,
And smiles of saintly recognition,
As sweet and tender as thy own.

Thou com'st not from the hush and shadow
To meet us, but to thee we come ;
With thee we never can be strangers,
And where thou art must still be home !





HYMN.

SUNG AT CHRISTMAS BY THE SCHOLARS OF ST.
HELENA'S ISLAND, S. C.

O NONE in all the world before
Were ever glad as we !
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free.

Thou Friend and Helper of the poor,
Who suffered for our sake,
To open every prison door,
And every yoke to break !

Bend low thy pitying face and mild,
And help us sing and pray ;
The hand that blessed the little child,
Upon our foreheads lay.

We hear no more the driver's horn,
No more the whip we fear,
This holy day that saw thee born
Was never half so dear.

The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile ;
O never shone a day so glad,
On sweet St. Helen's Isle.

We praise thee in our songs to-day,
To thee in prayer we call,
Make swift the feet and straight the way
Of freedom unto all.

Come once again, O blessed Lord !
Come walking on the sea !
And let the mainlands hear the word
That sets the islands free !



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